

LANGUAGE TEACHER IMMUNITY

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New concept “teacher immunity” was introduced by Phil Hiver and Zoltan Dornyei emerging from the accrued experiences of coping with disturbances and problems in stressful teaching environments, and that it functions as an indispensable protective armor allowing language teachers to survive the unavoidable hassles of classroom practice. They compare it with biological immunity and establish constructs in psychology, while describing the development of this emergent immunity through the framework of self-organization. It was stated that similar to biological immunity, teacher immunity can have potential negative consequences if it develops into a maladaptive form that is associated with a rigid and conservative practice as well as a general resistance to methodological change or innovation [1].

Thus, our aim is to research the ways in which teachers in Ukraine are experiencing recent changes in the policy environment which have affected their sense of professionalism and their professional identity in language teaching. It should be noted first that there are a number of strengths in teachers’ views on their professionalism, namely the importance of vocationalism, continuing learning and collaborative cultures. However, a number of limitations also emerged, such as feelings of ambivalence and conflict, associated with increased bureaucracy, qualities of university and school leadership, cultures of loneliness and the lack of understanding and ownership of the process of change.

One more issue to be considered is teacher research engagement while practicing. The development of national policies for promoting teacher research engagement don’t take into account a lack of time, access to material emerging as key factors which lead to teachers felt limited to be research-engaged and creative. Institutional barriers prevent creative research in the field of study. Another limitation which should be noted is freedom of choice of scientific conferences and journals. Nowadays in the era of globalization researches are inclined to participate

in International conferences and Symposiums abroad. However, national policy in the sphere of education is not adapted to such changes and therefore it's the teacher who suffers most of all and should have real "immunity". Thus, awareness raising, familiarizing teachers with productive coping strategies and encouraging the formation of appropriate narratives that stabilize the situation can help to cope with the problem.

References

1. Hiver Phil Language Teacher Immunity: A Double-Edged Sword/ Phil Hiver, Zoltán Dörnyei // Applied Linguistics, Oxford University Press, 2015. – <https://academic.oup.com/applij/article-abstract/doi/10.1093/applin/amv034/2952120/Language-Teacher-Immunity-A-Double-Edged-Sword>.